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POLICY/PROCEDURE 70-38

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Policy Approved by



Date

Procedure Approved by

Date

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY AND USE

References: Policy 15-2, Electronic Communication Systems Use and Privacy, Policy/Procedure 70-37, Using Electronic Mail; RCW 42.52.160, Ethics in Public Service; WAC 292-110-010, Use of State Resources.

This policy applies to all users of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission Internet system.

1. **Purpose**

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) is committed to providing its employees with Internet access to World Wide Web data and information that support the agency's mission and business functions.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and outline standards for Internet conduct that is to be followed by all employees. This includes, but is not limited to web-browsing, media downloads, list serves, news groups, discussion groups, telnet, file transfer protocol (FTP) and other Internet services that generate, store, transmit, and display files that contain images, sound, video, text, or software for internal and external business purposes.

2. **Definitions**

Downloading - This is the function of copying information from an external online service to a State Parks' computer or resource, such as disk or tape.

File Transfer Protocol (FTP) - A method for moving electronic files across the Internet. These files may contain images, sound, video, text, and/or software.

Internet - A global system for exchanging information. Supported by a network of computers, it facilitates the exchange of information in and between nations, commercial interests, educational institutions, government agencies, and individuals.

Streaming Content – Specially configured data that is received by the client's



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software and which can start displaying before the entire file has been transmitted. Some streaming content is delivered in a continuing broadcast which has no planned conclusion.

3. **Policy**

- A. Employees shall access the Internet only to conduct state business in a manner that advances the public's interest. When accessing the Internet employees are representing the agency, therefore all rules of conduct and law that apply in the regular workplace also apply on the Internet. These rules and laws include, but are not limited to, agency policies regarding the state ethics laws, work place harassment prevention, state employee misconduct, and a drug-free work place.
- B. Acceptable uses include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Communication with other agencies or agency business partners;
 - 2. Gathering information on park and recreation industry trends;
 - 3. Conducting legal, policy, and/or program research;
 - 4. Gaining timely access to government information, publications, and statistics.
- C. Employees are prohibited from downloading software, shareware or freeware from the Internet without prior approval from the Administrator of Information Management. Employees must honor copyright laws regarding protected commercial software and/or intellectual property. Unless directly related to work duties, employees are prohibited from streaming or downloading (and subsequently storing) music, video or other entertainment available from the Internet.
- D. Employees shall exercise caution and consider the following before downloading files and when browsing the Internet:
 - 1. The reputation and integrity of the data source;
 - 2. The accuracy, validity, and reliability of the information;
 - 3. Infringement of software licensing agreements;
 - 4. Trademark and copyright violations;
 - 5. Using agency provided software to minimize the impacts of virus infections.
 - 6. Impact on business processes and on network resources such as bandwidth.
 - 7. Downloading media for purposes other than agency business is prohibited.
- E. Employees shall bring any questions or concerns regarding the appropriate use of the Internet to the employee's supervisor or the Human Resources Service Center.

4. **Internet access privileges**

Each region manager/service center manager reviews and approves/disapproves requests for connection to the Internet using form M-003 Internet Access and E-Mail Account



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Agreement. Only those staff whose requests have written approval of the appropriate region manager/service center manager will be scheduled for connection to the Internet. The written request must state the use staff will make of the Internet, i.e., file transfer, Outlook web access, news group, research, information exchange, etc.

5. **Internet access**

- A. Employees may access the Internet for information regarding state employee benefits (i.e. Department of Personnel, Department of Retirement Systems, and Health Care Authority). However, employees shall *not* access the Internet for personal use (de minimus or other), private advantage, unlawful activities, or in violation of state or federal law or other agency policy.
- B. Misuse may result in disciplinary action ranging from verbal warning to termination of employment with the agency. Misuse may also result in termination of Internet access and/or future regular monitoring of internet access. The severity of the misuse governs the severity of the disciplinary action. Misuse includes, but is not limited to:
 - 1. Accessing non-business related chat groups, list serves, news groups, streaming content or other downloadable media;
 - 2. Accessing a personal e-mail account for purposes other than agency business;
 - 3. Operating, advertising, or promoting a non-agency endorsed event;
 - 4. Soliciting money for religious, political causes, or non-agency business related events;
 - 5. Unauthorized access to protected state resources;
 - 6. Transmitting unprofessional communications;
 - 7. Viewing or disseminating offensive or harassing statements, including degradation of others based on their race, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, and religious or political belief;
 - 8. Viewing or disseminating incendiary statements that might incite violence or describe or promote the use of weapons or devices associated with terrorist and other illegal activities;
 - 9. Viewing, disseminating, or soliciting sexually oriented messages and/or images.

6. **The agency reserves the right to monitor all employees' Internet activities**

All employees are reminded that the Internet is a state resource. The construction, maintenance, repair, and operation of this electronic connection occasionally may result in random monitoring of transmitted or stored electronic messages and activities. Messages and activities also may be monitored during the course of investigations of illegal activity or inappropriate use of the Internet, or the result of disciplinary action for violation of this policy.